
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

Submitted by: LFPC

Finding:

- 1) There is currently inadequate funding for fuels reduction projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin, as identified in the 10-Year Fuels Reduction Strategy, and to support defensible space treatments on developed parcels located within the Basin.
- 2) The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) funding is currently insufficient to fund the 10-Year Fuels Reduction Strategy due to slow land sales in Southern Nevada. SNPLMA funding and has fallen well short of the amounts necessary to complete fuels reduction in the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- 3) The States of California, and Nevada and the local jurisdictions within the Lake Tahoe Basin currently invest significant funding into fuels reduction activities in the Basin.
- 4) The U.S. Forest Service, the States of California and Nevada, and the local fire agencies are currently working to diversify their fuels reduction funding portfolios; however the completion of the necessary fuels reduction projects will require a multi-year process and an emergency situation exists today.
- 5) Because an emergency situation exists in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and because the excessive accumulations of forest fuels pose an imminent hazard to life, property and the environment; disaster mitigation funds should be allocated to Lake Tahoe Basin fuels reduction efforts.

Background: Fuels reduction projects are most effective when located immediately adjacent to communities. In the past, legislation such as the Santini Burton Lands Act authorized the purchase of urban parcels by the U.S. Forest Service, California Tahoe Conservancy and Nevada State Lands. Additionally, a myriad of small Public Utility Districts and General Improvement Districts currently own land adjacent to communities or were consolidated into larger Public Utility Districts. Similarly, many of the Basin's communities are located within or comprised of planned unit subdivisions and are controlled by homeowner associations. As a result, there is a very complex arrangement of land ownerships around the communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

In response to this complex mix of land ownership, the public land managers and local fire agencies have formed a single fuels reduction oversight body and a project implementation team designed to implement projects without regard to jurisdiction. The Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC) oversees the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT), which manages both fuels reduction and defensible space projects. The Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Chiefs are currently formalizing this organization through the formation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA).

The States, public land managers and local jurisdictions currently invest significant funding to the fuels reduction effort in the Lake Tahoe Basin. These projects are now prioritized and coordinated through the MAC and TFFT. Present annual expenditures of state and local funds are approximately: **(General estimates only and subject to revision)**

California Tahoe Conservancy	\$1 Million
California Proposition 40 funds	\$1 Million
California Prop 84 funds	TBD
California State Parks	\$500,000
Nevada State Lands	\$500,000
Nevada Division of Forestry	\$300,000
North Lake Tahoe Fire	\$500,000
North Tahoe Fire	\$500,000
Tahoe Douglas Fire	\$250,000
South Lake Tahoe Fire	\$150,000
Lake Valley Fire	\$275,000
Meeks Bay Fire	\$75,000
Nevada Fire Safe Council	\$300,000
Private contributions	\$1 Million
Total	\$6.4 Million/TBD

These expenditures result in forest fuels reduction on approximately 1500 acres annually, defensible space on approximately 700 parcels, chipping of hazardous fuels from defensible space from over 4000 private properties, organization of 26 community Fire Safe Chapters, and the management of seven 10-person hand crews that thin forests and also serve as fire crews.

This level of effort would likely be sufficient for the long term maintenance of fuels reduction efforts, once the current volume of fuels reduction and defensible space has been addressed. For that purpose, new funding sources from property tax assessments and fees are currently being pursued.

There is an immediately pressing need for fuels reduction on state, municipal and private properties totaling over 15,000 acres immediately adjacent to the communities located within the Lake Tahoe Basin. Additionally, defensible space needs to be created on over 30,000 privately owned parcels within the Basin, and there is a need to dispose of the woody debris that will result from forest

fuels reduction and defensible space projects. In order to complete this level of fire and fuels reduction work, the MAC has estimated the following additional funding will be needed over the next 5 years:

Create fuel break parcel & projects database	\$500,000 (one time funds)
Create a defensible space risk database	<u>\$500,000</u> (one time funds)
Subtotal, one time funding required	\$1,000,000
Fund fuels reduction project staff	\$450,000/ year
Fund science for sensitive lands treatments	\$150,000 / year
Fund defensible space project coordination	\$350,000 / year
Fund defensible space inspections	\$300,000 / year
Fuels and D-Space database maintenance	\$282,000/year
Fund homeowner education campaign	<u>\$250,000 / year</u>
Subtotal, operational funding required	\$1,782,000/year
Fund forest fuels reduction efforts	<u>\$10 Million / year</u>

During the term of the current emergency, the communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin must undertake maximum efforts to secure long term funding to support ongoing maintenance. Until the current need for fuels reduction on State, municipal, and private lands is accomplished, the communities of the Lake Tahoe Basin, the environment, and lives of the Basin's residents and guests remain at-risk. Significant and reliable funding is needed to complete fuels reduction projects on state, municipal and private property identified in the 10-Year Fuels Reduction Strategy for the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Recommendation(s)

- 1) It is recommended that the States of California and Nevada provide stop gap funding for \$1,000,000 to cover the initial costs associated with a coordinated fuels reduction program plus an additional \$1,782,000 per year for ongoing costs for a period of five years.
- 2) It is recommended that the Lake Tahoe Basin Fire Chiefs form a Joint Powers Authority to coordinate the stop gap funding provided by the State of California and the State of Nevada, and to coordinate long term maintenance of fuels reduction project areas and community defensible space.
- 3) It is recommended that the TRPA manage the database and GIS components of the fire management system and that the Lake Tahoe Fire agencies would perform management oversight of this work through the JPA.
- 4) It is recommended that the Lake Tahoe Fire Chiefs find more stable, long-term funding to replace the stop gap funding provided by the States, likely

through the collection of a parcel fee or similar special assessments on property owners.

Impacts of Implementation: *(The implementation of any Recommendation is likely to have specific impacts. Consider potential consequences related to each of the following areas):*

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is REQUIRED:

- ☐ Cost - \$1,000,000 immediate funding and \$1,782,000 yearly for a period of three years.
- ☐ Funding source – The States of California and Nevada
- ☐ Staffing – As identified above
- ☐ Existing regulations and/or laws – No change necessary

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is OPTIONAL:

- ☐ Operational
- ☐ Social
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Policy
- ☐ Health and Safety
- ☐ Environmental
- ☐ Interagency